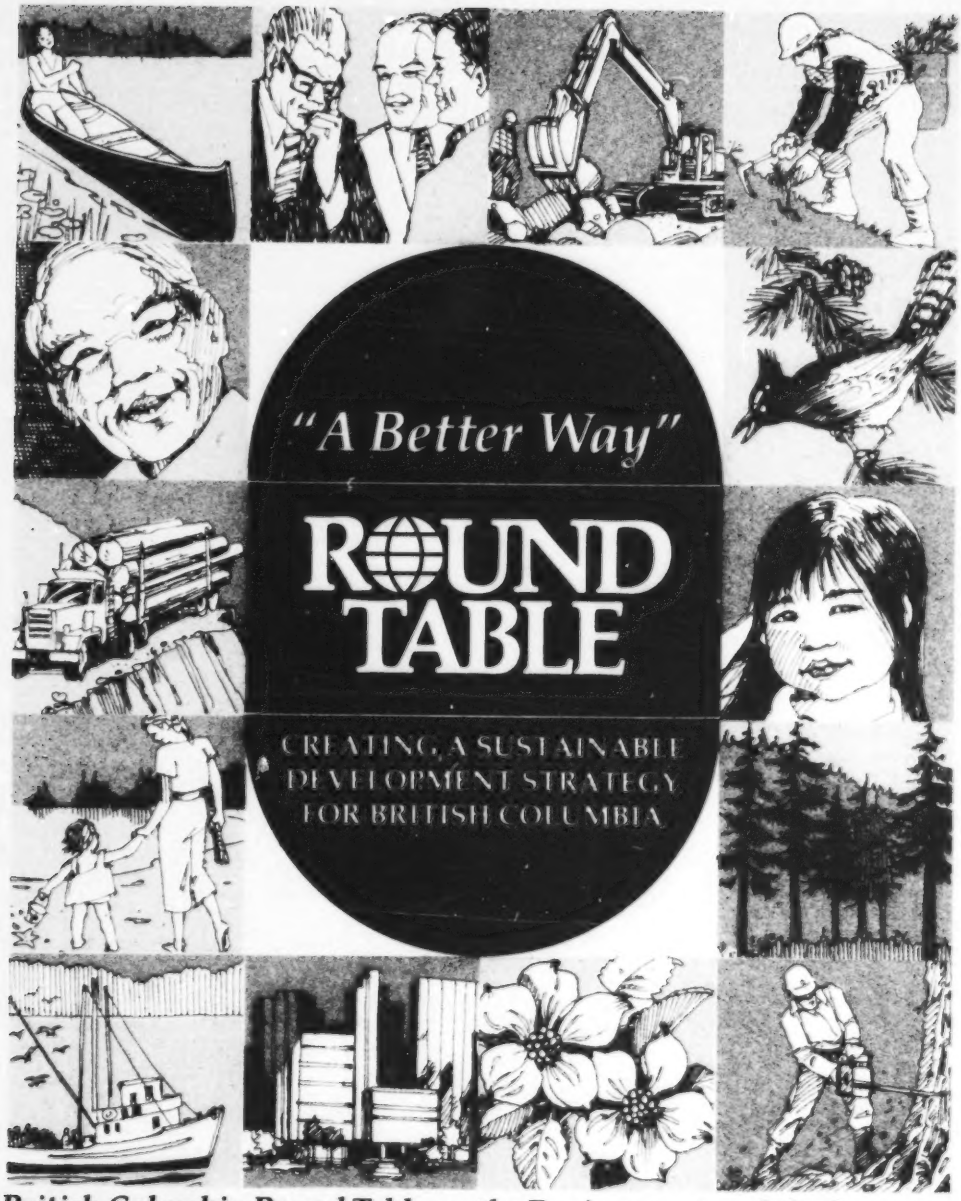

British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

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Members of The British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

The Round Table is made up of British Columbians drawn from all walks of life, and with strikingly different perspectives. Like you, they want to resolve the province's environmental, social and economic concerns.

Charles J. Connaghan, Chairman, Industrial relations management consultant, former president of the Construction Labour Relations Association of B.C., former vice-president Administrative Services, U.B.C.

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Ken Georgetti - President and chief executive officer of the B.C. Federation of Labour.

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Ben Marr - Regional Manager, Greater Vancouver Regional District.

Rozlynne Mitchell - President of the Save Howe Sound Society.

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Bob Peart - Executive Director, Outdoor Recreation Council of B.C., president, I.L.E. Consulting Services.

Robert Plecas - Deputy Minister, Ministry of Regional and Economic Development.

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Paul West - Director of Environmental Studies and an associate professor of Chemistry, University of Victoria.

Bryan Williams, Q.C., L.L.D. - Chairman, former Wilderness Advisory Committee, past-president, Canadian Bar Association, chairman, Port Hardy Ferrochromium Review Panel.

The contents of this publication have been decided by the consensus of all Round Table members.

The Round Table wishes to acknowledge the contribution of Robert Prescott-Allen, World Strategy for Sustainability

Chairman's Message

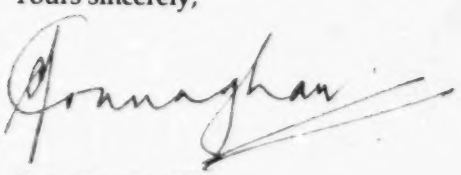
Through the British Columbia Round Table on Environment and Economy, our province is now developing a sustainable development strategy.

The Round Table wants to bring together people from every region, and every sector of the economy to design a better way for British Columbia. Your ideas are valuable and your vision of the future is important.

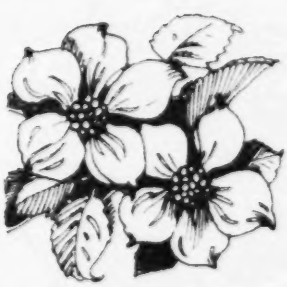
Never before in the history of our province has such an ambitious task been undertaken. The Round Table is not content just to let the future happen; we are committed to shaping and building the future of British Columbia for the benefit not only of present British Columbians but also succeeding generations.

A BETTER WAY is the Round Table's proposal for developing a public consultation process. It is *not* the sustainable development strategy. With your help, that will come later. As Chairman of the Round Table, I invite you to join us in developing a vision of British Columbia.

Yours sincerely,



C. J. Connaghan
Chairman



Introduction

The Global Context:

There are eight times as many people alive today as there were at the dawn of the industrial revolution, two centuries ago. Our consumption of energy and other resources has grown at an even faster rate. As a result - without meaning to - we have been reshaping the earth.

From a global perspective our potential to alter the environment has reached immense proportions. The combined effect of development decisions, intended to contribute toward a better world, has in many cases damaged the environment that sustains it.

We have taken the planet for granted. We have failed to add up the full costs of what we do. We are now seeing signs of the reckoning that must eventually be paid: thinning of the protective ozone layer, the spread of deserts into what used to be agricultural land, deforestation and the threat of global warming.

Humanity's present relationship with the environment is clearly unsustainable. Yet economic development is necessary if we are to continue to feed, clothe and provide for ourselves and our children. We must find a better way of harmonizing economic development with the environment, and yet still build a better society for ourselves and for those who come after us.

The Canadian Context:

In Canada there is a diversity of opinion regarding the state of the environment and our ability over the long term to increase present economic growth. But there are some inescapable facts. We have the highest per capita consumption of energy in the world, with a heavy reliance on fossil fuels and attendant implications for global warming. We live, however, in a cold climate and inexpensive energy is one way we achieve our competitive advantage. We have acid rain and problems with endangered species. Yet we also have the third largest amount of wilderness area in the world and an abundance of diverse natural resources. We are a relatively new country of immense proportions, but small population. In short, we have the time and opportunity to understand and develop the essential linkages between the environment and the economy which will sustain us into the future.

The British Columbia Context:

British Columbia's economy is predominantly based on our ability to develop our natural resources. Economic development which makes efficient use of our natural resources is necessary to meet our existing population needs and an expanding future population. We still have the opportunity to avoid the mistakes others have made and enhance our accountability as stewards.

We have to recognize that the environment and the economy are inextricably linked and develop a better way to make decisions that protect and preserve the environment as we develop. This partnership, this better way, is called sustainable development.

To achieve sustainable development will take a commitment to work together and overcome the diversity of opinion. We must move to forge a consensus on a better way. This paper is the first step in the creation of a strategy for sustainable development in British Columbia.

The British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

The Government of British Columbia has established a unique body to foster the creation of, and seek consensus on, a strategy for sustainable development in our province. The Round Table on the Environment and the Economy is a group of men and women from all regions of the province, from all walks of life, and from different segments of the spectrum of opinions on environmental, social and economic issues.

The Round Table's task is to stimulate and coordinate the efforts of all British Columbians — whether they represent interest groups or are simply concerned individuals — who wish to join in the process of finding a better way for British Columbia.

This paper sets out the principles of sustainable development and the context within which they may be applied in British Columbia. It outlines the process and the problems, and invites you to be a part of the solution. It also asks some of the questions that must be answered before British Columbia can achieve sustainable development. But there are doubtless many more questions than are contained here, and it will be up to British Columbians to ask them — and to answer them — as we search together for a better way.

Sustainable Development in British Columbia

Background

Sustainable development is a new concept for many people. It is most often defined as ensuring that our use of resources and the environment today does not damage the prospect of their being used by future generations.

The idea of sustainable development began to receive worldwide attention in 1987 when the World Commission on Environment and Development (known as the Brundtland Commission after its chair, Madame Gro Harlem Brundtland) released its report *Our Common Future.*

Canada responded to the Brundtland Commission's findings by establishing a national task force to point the way toward the creation of federal and provincial sustainable development strategies. British Columbia's own task force issued a report in 1989 entitled *Sustaining the Living Land.*

In this report the task force called for the formation of a round table of concerned citizens who could lead the effort to achieve a strategy for sustainable development in British Columbia. The round table could also provide advice to government on resolving disputes over land use between environmental and economic interests, and could help British Columbians to become more aware of environmental issues.

In January 1990, the Government of British Columbia established our province's Round Table on the Environment and the Economy to craft a sustainable development strategy. The Round Table is bringing British Columbians together in search of a better way.

Principles of Sustainable Development

After reviewing the work of the World Conservation Strategy, the Brundtland Commission, the national and provincial task forces, and other studies, the Round Table has identified six principles which may lay the foundation for sustainable development. These are not fixed in stone, but are to be part of a discussion process.

These principles could be used as questions to test the desirability of our choices and decisions we have to make between the environment and the economy. Each time we make a major decision as a society we should ask ourselves if it is consistent with these principles.

Limiting our impact on the living world to stay within its carrying capacity

The carrying capacity of an ecosystem (an interrelated community of plants and animals) is its ability to renew itself or to absorb wastes. Careful management can increase carrying capacity, but limits must be respected when making development decisions. Identifying those limits requires detailed scientific study; in the absence of scientific data, social values may be substituted as standards in making judgements.

Preserving and protecting the environment

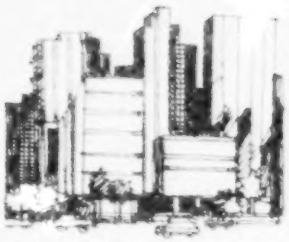
Preserving and protecting the environment involves three requirements:

• conserving life-support services, which are the processes that allow land, water, air and life to be productive, to adapt and to renew themselves, and which include the chemical balance of soil and water, stable climates, food supplies and the recycling of nutrients along the food chain, and the cleansing of polluted air and water;

• conserving biological diversity, which means ensuring that there is a proper variety of different life forms in all niches of the environment, and that there is a varied genetic pool within the population of each species; the potential usefulness to humankind of many plant species (for example, as sources of medicines) has not yet been determined; plant or animal populations that are not genetically diverse can be less resistant to disease or pests;

• ensuring that our use of renewable resources is sustainable (which means conserving soil, wild and domesticated plants and animals, and ecosystems); across the whole province, some ecosystems will be preserved, others will be modified by development.

Holding to a minimum the depletion of nonrenewable resources



Some resources, such as petroleum, cannot be renewed. More efficient use of these resources, and recycling (as is done with used motor oil) can extend their useful life. But, when lifetime costs are compared, it may be economically more prudent to develop substitutes for nonrenewable resources, such as by making methanol from organic waste as a substitute for fossil fuels.

Promoting long-term economic development that increases the benefits from a given stock of resources without drawing down on our stocks of environmental assets

British Columbia, as a small part of a global economy, must compete for markets, investment capital and skilled people. Our existing and expanding future population requires economic development to sustain it and we must strive for sustainable communities. Gaining sustainable benefits from our province's natural wealth could involve:

• favouring technologies and management techniques that make the most efficient use of each resource;

• developing accounting methods that allow prices and taxes to reflect the full costs of economic decisions (for example, we cannot judge which is better — electric or natural gas cars — until we compare for each the total costs of mining, processing, energy, assembly, transportation, repairs, environmental impacts and disposal over the lifetime of each product;

• ensuring that measures of economic performance include the costs of environmental damage and depletion of the natural resource base (for example, present methods of measuring economic activity make the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill appear as a source of growth for Alaska's gross domestic product);

• building upon and diversifying our present high-volume resource industries to develop high value service and information industries that create wealth from the processing of information (for example, computer mapping systems);

• anticipating and understanding the effects of development decisions on other sectors and interests (for example, hydroelectric dams that provide power for a distant region's industries mean environmental and social consequences for the region around the dam site; or range land set aside for cattle can affect the wildlife on which the area's tourism industry depends).

Aiming for a fair distribution of the benefits and the costs of resource use and environmental protection

The benefits and costs of resource use and environmental protection have not always been shared equally among different communities and interest groups, among regions that are poor and those that are affluent, and between our generation and those who will come after us.

The transition to sustainability will mean more difficulties for some communities and interest groups than for others.

People who make their livings from unsustainable activities will need help in making adjustments.

Promoting values that support sustainability

To be successful, sustainable development must rest upon social values that holds sustainability to be morally good. Values that support an understanding of the interdependence of environmental, social and economic interests should be encouraged, while those which do not should be changed.

The Context for Sustainable Development in British Columbia

The Environment

Today's generation of British Columbians has inherited an abundant environment, rich in diversity, with many distinctive natural landscapes ranging from sub-arctic tundra to coastal rain forest, from alpine meadows to river valleys. Our province encompasses one of the world's largest remaining wilderness areas, with more species of wildlife than any other part of Canada. There are many rare and special attributes in the land, waters and living creatures of British Columbia.

Our rivers and drainage systems are spawning grounds for salmon; our lakes and marshlands are pathways for migratory birds; among the myriad islands, fjords and channels of our coastline, some of the world's most spectacular marine mammals feed and rear their young in waters rich in fish and plankton.

Our forests are a natural habitat for a myriad of plant, wildlife, and invertebrate species. Old growth stands are essential for biological diversity. The forests are also a vital part of the carbon cycle, the worldwide natural process by which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and combines with other elements — like oxygen and hydrogen — to form organic matter. Forests and plants in general "scrub" carbon dioxide from the air, preventing it from trapping more of the sun's heat and increasing the "greenhouse effect" believed responsible for global warming.

Our province's varied ecosystems provide us with clean air and water and contain the resources that support the forest and mining industries, fisheries, hydroelectric developments, agriculture and tourism, which generate a large percentage of our economic wealth. British Columbia's spectacular scenery, wildlife, and natural environment are an essential part of our sense of who we are as British Columbians.

Although the people and industrial activities of British Columbia occupy only a relatively small part of the province's ninety-five million hectares of land and water, much of the natural environment has already undergone rapid change. Virtually all lowlands, valleys, plateaus and forest lands have been used or marked for settlement, agriculture, forestry, mining or energy developments.

Some six per cent of British Columbia has been set aside in parks or protected areas, but some landscapes, ecosystems and important wildlife habitats are not yet represented or are under-represented in those preserves. Not all wildlife populations and plant ecosystems have enough undisturbed, unthreatened territory to ensure their survival and protection of biodiversity. Public interest in preservation has grown however, and the preservation of more land in its natural condition is sometimes in direct conflict with existing economic processes and investments.

Beyond its effects on wildlife and wilderness, our society has lowered the quality of our air, water and soil in some urban and industrial zones. Automobile and smokestack emissions cause smog, add to local and global accumulations of carbon dioxide, and pose a threat of acid rain. We have allowed too much industrial effluent and sewage to enter our rivers, lakes and coastal waters. Although we have lately recognized the need for special handling of dangerous substances like paint, solvents, cleansers, battery acids and biomedical waste, we still tend to dispose of them in the most convenient manner, without sufficient regard to the consequences for the environment or human health.

Public acceptance of domestic recycling, reducing, and reusing programs shows the beginnings of a willingness among British Columbians to be part of the solution. But there is understandable public confusion as to what the environ-

mental priorities and the correct information may be.

Most British Columbians realize that their province is not facing as much environmental trouble as some other areas of the world, and that there is time to avoid mistakes that others have made. British Columbians recognize that we must protect the health of the planet and the organisms with which we share the earth, and that we must not take away from future generations the options and advantages the environment has given to us.

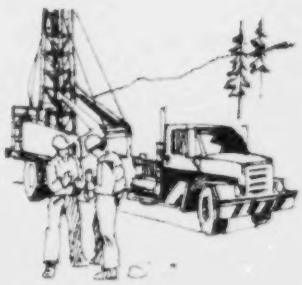
British Columbians also know that changes to the environment will levy a long-term cost; to reduce or avoid that eventual reckoning, how much cost are we willing to pay today?

To answer that question, and to create sustainable development, we must understand the complex relationship among the environment, our society and its economy, and learn how to assess and compare environmental, social and economic values. We must ensure that the environmental and social costs of economic decisions are reflected in the market place.

And similarly if, to protect the environment, we must make decisions which have negative economic consequences, we must be sure we can justify the need for these changes to those who may be negatively impacted, as well as providing other economic opportunities to these people.

There are many more important questions we must answer:

- What kind of an environment should we pass to our children and grandchildren?
- How do we agree on a set of environmental standards to protect the quality of the environment we are handing on to future generations?
- How do we weigh the present benefits of development against the conservation of options for posterity?
- What are our responsibilities to other creatures — to animals, plants and the rest of nature? How can we meet these responsibilities while meeting our own needs?
- Are we prepared to become stewards of the environment?
- What are the contributions made by our province's natural resources to our society and economy? Which ecosystems are particularly important to particular sectors and interest groups, and why?
- Which ecosystems are vital providers of life-support services? How much can they be used and still renew themselves?
- How do we maintain a diversity of ecosystems, species and genetic stocks?
- What is the present state of the environment, including soil and groundwater, and what are the trends?
- What are the environmental priorities in British Columbia?
- Are the full impacts of current methods for disposing of solid, liquid and gaseous wastes understood and considered in our decisions?
- What is the proper balance among the use, development, preservation, maintenance and restoration of land, water and other resources? How do we determine that balance in a way that is acceptable to British Columbia's society?
- How well does the existing legislation address environmental concerns?



Society

British Columbians can trace their ethnic origins to every part of the globe, and our society encompasses a rich mixture of cultures, values and ideas. For thousands

of years, the province has been the homeland of aboriginal peoples who lived on the land within the constraints imposed by the natural environment. Less than two hundred years ago, Europeans brought their political, legal and economic systems, along with a social ethic that encouraged economic development. Since then, the population has grown to three million, and British Columbia's population growth rate remains higher than that of the rest of Canada because of immigration from other provinces and other countries.

Almost all British Columbians live on no more than five per cent of the province's land, and some seventy-five per cent of the population is concentrated in the highly urbanized southwest corner that occupies only two per cent of the whole province. The centralization of people and industry in so small an area poses problems of solid and liquid waste disposal, air pollution, water supply and land supply in competition with agriculture. As the population grows, restoring and maintaining the environmental quality necessary for a sound economy and for human and ecological health is a major challenge.

The diversity of our society leads to contrasting views as to how it should evolve. On one issue or another, perspectives and values may vary between native and non-native, rural and urban, developer and environmentalist, consumer and conserver. When deeply held views become polarized, they prevent the formation of a consensus, and decision-making becomes extremely difficult. As well, in recent years, native peoples have undertaken serious legal challenges to government, in pursuit of aboriginal concerns. These and other social dynamics at work in British Columbia underscore the need for decision-making processes that can bring people together to resolve their differences.

Changing social values and new knowledge can have deep implications for environmental and economic decision-making. They raise questions that the Round Table and our society must seek to answer:

- Since science will probably never give us certainties to work with, what environmental risk will society accept in exchange for development?
- Will our urban populations and resource consumption continue to grow, and how do we reconcile this with the environment's carrying capacity?
- How do we balance environmental ethics, economic development and social well-being?
- When environmental and social impacts are uncertain, what values allow society to choose wisely?
- Should environmental sustainability override other factors in decision-making?
- What will be the consequences, on lifestyles and capital investments, of changing social and environmental values? How do we accept them? Must we change our lifestyles?
- Are conflicts among sectors and interest groups avoidable? How can we recognize and build upon the compatibilities among conflicting groups?
- What roles should government and local communities play in environmental, social and economic planning, in areas such as land use, population growth and industrial development?
- What is the best way to give communities a say in the planning and management of the conservation and development of their resources?
- How do we relate decisions at the local level to provincial, national and global objectives?
- How can decision-making be brought to accommodate native values, concerns and issues?

The Economy

Our province's economy is a product of British Columbians' application of capital, labour and expertise to the natural resources of the province's environment. Domestic markets are small, and the economy is strongly dependent on the extraction and primary processing of natural resource commodities for export.

Forest products, mining and fishing have been British Columbia's economic mainstays since colonial times. Agriculture and tourism, both dependent on environmental values like soil and water quality, scenery and wildlife, also make important contributions. Natural resource industries are the lifeblood of the provincial economy, but other sectors — such as services, administration, manufacturing and transportation, which are largely dependent on resource extraction — are predominant in the southwestern corner where the majority of British Columbians live.

Energy Industry

Energy drives all other economic sectors, and is fundamental to the way our entire civilization is organized. Food supplies, transportation, technology, warmth and light all require energy. Energy is so pervasive a part of modern life, that it is difficult to quantify as a component of the province's gross domestic product.

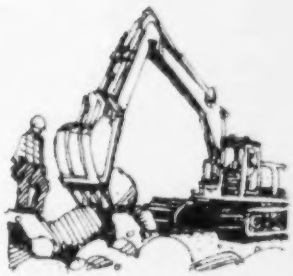
Low cost energy in British Columbia has attracted a high concentration of energy intensive industries, particularly in the non-metropolitan areas of the province. As a result much of our resource-based employment is located outside of the Victoria and Vancouver urban areas.

Energy development raises social and environmental issues in British Columbia, since hydroelectric projects require flooding of large lowland areas, destroying their ecosystems and making them useless for settlement or agriculture. Impacts are also felt downstream.

Yet unlike fossil fuels, hydro electricity has no negative effects on such things as global warming and ozone depletion.

Transportation, as well as some domestic and industrial energy requirements, depend on petroleum. This dependence causes serious air pollution which contributes to atmospheric deterioration in the Lower Mainland (in the form of smog) and globally (as a contributor to global warming). As well, oil spills in coastal waters have caused major environmental impacts.

The province also produces large volumes of natural gas, which is more efficient than most other fossil fuels, but still poses the philosophical question of whether a sustainable economy can be built upon a non-renewable resource.



The province has large reserves of coal that are mined for export. Emissions from coal burning are major pollutants, and have been socially and environmentally unacceptable in British Columbia. Nuclear power has also been rejected as an energy option, although some British Columbians dispute that decision.

Energy conservation is perceived as crucial and has been found to be cost-effective. Cogeneration of heat and electricity from burning waste wood offers opportunities to recover energy from waste products. Alternative energy sources, such as hydrogen, solar energy and the wind, are being examined but they require much more research.

Energy-related questions to be resolved are:

- Are present energy conservation programs sufficient?
- How could we increase these initiatives?
- How can we meet our energy needs sustainably and without pollution?
- How can we achieve our energy goals with the least impact on the environment?

Forest Industry

Lumber and pulp and paper, produced mainly for export, are the cornerstone of the British Columbia economy. Even without considering the spin-off effects of the forest industry in the service sector, the forest industry's $6.6 billion share of the gross domestic product represented about ten per cent of the province's GDP and about one third of the GDP for goods-producing industries.

Traditionally, the industry has relied upon old-growth timber stocks that are now rapidly diminishing. Numerous concerns have been raised that the remaining supplies of old growth, along with those second-growth stands that have matured enough for harvesting, cannot sustain present levels of production. It is now recognized that reforestation and intensive forest management practices are necessary.

The forest industry's impacts on the environment are a source of controversy. Harvesting practices such as clearcutting, slash burning, and road building, as well as other industry operations, in some instances have significant environmental impact and have contributed to land, air and water pollution.

Most forest lands are publicly owned. The forest tenure system, by which Crown lands are managed by forest companies, encompasses about half of the province, including most of the productive forest. Growing social interest in wildlife, water conservation and recreation has created pressure to reduce the amount of land available for commercial forestry and to change present logging practices. At the same time, the annual timber harvest has increased in the past decade, although the number of jobs in the industry has shrunk through technological change.

Forest-related questions to be answered are:

- Are current rates of timber harvesting sustainable?
- Are there greater efficiencies to be reaped from more intensive forestry management?
- Can we accommodate competing demands on forest lands and still maintain a strong and productive forest industry?
- Do we have enough information to make decisions? If not, what do we need to know?
- How can we maintain biological diversity and the integrity of forest ecosystems?
- What level of environmental quality are we willing to accept in exchange for this economic contribution of the forest industry?

Mining Industry

The primary sector of the B.C. mining industry contributed $1.9 billion to GDP in 1989, or approximately three per cent of the total, making it a vital component of the provincial economy. Production is again mainly for export, and mineral deposits throughout the province are developed if the combination of ore grades, extraction costs and international demand offers an economic opportunity.

There have been negative environmental impacts from some mineral exploration, but without mineral exploration, new mines will not be found. Mineable mineral deposits are relatively rare, and finding them requires exploration over vast stretches of land. They are also a finite resource, so that every mine opened must eventually close. And, although minerals are necessary to civilization, world demand for them fluctuates with the rise and fall of the international business cycle. The industry is therefore cyclical, with consequences for the pro-

vincial economy and for any community whose prosperity depends upon a single mine. Mining and processing operations have led to problems with acid rock drainage and heavy metal contamination.

Mining-related questions to be resolved are:

- What are the standards for sustainability in an industry that depends upon a nonrenewable resource?
- How do we harmonize exploration and economic development of mineral deposits with protection of the environment?
- How can communities be helped to anticipate and cope with the effects of mine closures?
- Are the potentially adverse effects of mining and exploration adequately controlled? Do we know how to control the environmental impacts of mining?

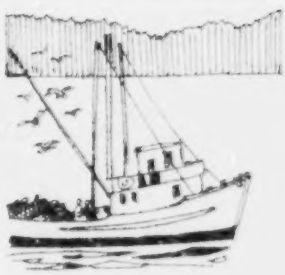
Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

British Columbia's commercial coastal fishery contributes one-half of one per cent of the province's gross domestic product or $315 million, and has greatly diversified its operations in recent years. Wild finfish — salmon, herring, groundfish — have been the traditional mainstays, but overfishing and the loss of habitat in estuaries and spawning grounds caused by poor land use have led to close regulation of the fishing industry.

Commercial fishing also includes fish farming, farming and gathering shellfish, and collecting crabs and shrimp. There has been increased interest lately in harvesting seaweed, and in high-value speciality products like herring and salmon roe.

There are seventy-three species of freshwater fish in the province, and sport fishing is important in recreation and as a world-class attraction for tourists. Sport fishing is now estimated to involve six million "angler days" per year, with a catch of more than nine million fish. Most sport fish are taken in the wild, and even the thirty per cent of the catch that originates from hatcheries are raised from the eggs of wild fish, which is not the case in other parts of North America.

Because fish-bearing waters are easily disturbed or contaminated, meeting the demands of the fisheries in the face of increasing urban growth and industrial operations is a difficult challenge. This sector of the economy must also deal with: competition among different users of the resource (native peoples, commercial fisheries, the recreation sector, and conservationists); conflicts with other industries, especially the forest sector over management of uplands; and international trade and tariff regulations.



Fishery-related questions to be answered are:

- Are present practices and rates of resource use sustainable?
- How can we better manage our unique coastal resources?
- How can we better protect fish habitat?
- What size of buffer zone along waterways is required?
- What is the fairest way to share fish stocks and habitats among the different users?

Agriculture

Less than five per cent of British Columbia's land is suited to agriculture, which — along with food and beverage manufacturing — directly accounts for about two and a half per cent of provincial gross domestic product, and for more than half the food consumed by British Columbians. In the southwest, agriculture is centred on dairying, poultry and market gardening;

in the southern interior, tree fruits and wine grapes are the dominant crops; throughout the rest of the interior, livestock is the mainstay.

Agriculture must cope with a range of problems and issues: competition from urban growth and wildlife; loss of range and soil fertility; the environmental and human health impact from the use of fertilizers and pesticides; water supply and quality; and economic competition from producers outside the province.

Food production is the fundamental attribute of civilization, but a strong agricultural community is difficult to maintain in the face of a limited supply of land, competition from lower-cost foreign producers, and dependence upon the limited finances and capabilities of individual farmers. British Columbia's best farmlands are square in the path of urban development, and urban development on fertile land raises the global issue of whether it is right to subsidize food production when it could be produced more cheaply in countries that need the income.

Agriculture-related questions to be answered are:

- At what level is agriculture sustainable in British Columbia?
- How can we balance urban development and the protection of agricultural land?

Tourism

Tourism and recreation are clearly important to the British Columbia economy — bringing in foreign exchange and circulating local dollars from one community to another — but present methods of accounting for economic activity do not allow tourism's actual contribution to the provincial gross domestic product to be fully measured. The Ministry of Tourism estimates that more than ninety thousand British Columbians work in the tourism industry, and that number increases by five per cent per year. Although it is a seasonally cyclical industry in most parts of the province, tourism showed more employment growth than any industry in the 1980s, with wilderness adventure tourism being the fastest growing segment.

British Columbia's natural environment, especially scenery, wildlife, and fish, is the province's greatest attraction for recreationists and for tourists, even for those who confine their visits to our major cities. While resource-based industries come into conflict with environmental values, so can tourism have impacts for the environment. Over-use of some areas can destroy natural assets, leading to conflicts between tourists and recreationists over such issues as the degree to which wilderness areas should be accessible.

The tourism industry must have access to an adequate supply of sufficiently diverse natural areas with which to attract customers, while remaining competitive with the quality and cost of tourism products elsewhere. The industry's rapid growth raises important issues related to employment patterns and the attitude of British Columbians toward tourists.

Tourism-related questions to be resolved are:

- What is tourism's contribution to the economy, and how does it compare to other sectors?

- Will tourism continue to grow in its importance to the economy, and what will be the effects of that growth on the environment, society and economy?
- Is tourism a land- and water-based resource industry? What is the relative importance of wilderness, of non-wilderness rural areas, and of urban areas?
- How can we make sure that we give proper recognition to tourism and recreation in the way we manage and allocate land and water?

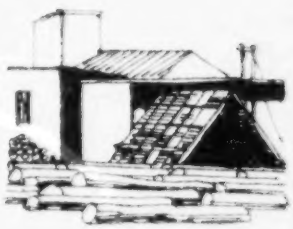
Over-all Economy and Trends

Other important sectors of the provincial economy, such as manufacturing, wholesale and retail, business services, finance, transportation and public administration, depend strongly upon British Columbia's resource-based industries. Manufacturing, transportation and business services, in particular, are closely tied to the cyclical health of the forest sector. Because the service-based economy is concentrated in urban areas, away from the resource hinterland, many British Columbians have not focused on the relationship between the goods-producing and service-providing sectors. As well, the relationship can be difficult to quantify, although wages and business receipts in forestry or mining can undergo multiplier effects that have been said to at least double the contribution each sector makes to the over-all economy.

There are distinct regional economies illustrated by urban-rural differences. Generally urban economies are based on the service sector, while rural economies are resource dependent. Demographics predict future population growth will be concentrated in urban communities thus widening the urban-rural gap.

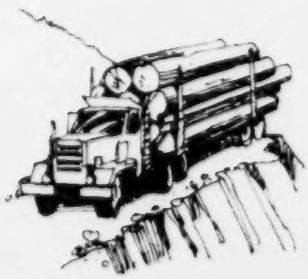
Government policy has been to encourage growth and diversity, both provincially and regionally, and the Province has undertaken initiatives to encourage new manufacturing enterprises and small business growth as a source of new jobs.

The pursuit of industrial growth raises concerns over the protection of the environment, including ambient environmental quality, the sustainability of resources, and protection of biological diversity. But it should be noted that, throughout the world, the strengthening of national and regional economies has led to improved environmental protection. Protecting the environment and fostering a healthy economy are ultimately part of the same process. To do both, we must find answers to questions like these:



- Is British Columbia's current economic development sustainable? What is the role of economic diversification? Does it have different implications for urban and rural economies?
- What is the potential for increasing the sustainable economic benefit from our province's natural resources, and how can we do it?
- How is British Columbia's economic strategy integrated with social values and the need to protect the environment?
- What roles should government play in fostering economic development and environmental protection?
- What kinds of economic development should be encouraged, and how, and where?
- To what extent are a healthy economy and a healthy environment interdependent? Over the long term can we have one without the other?
- When we measure economic health, how do we include a measurement of environmental assets?

- How do we ensure proper environmental assessments, with full public involvement?
- How do we establish environmental legislation and standards that allow appropriate decision-making in a changing, competitive world?
- How do we balance the needs of competing sectors fairly while maintaining environmental integrity?
- What environmental consequences will we accept in exchange for economic gains?
- What are the indicators of sustainability for each economic sector?
- Can we have development without physical growth?
- How can investment levels be adjusted without disrupting the economy, as environmental standards are upgraded to conform to advances in scientific understanding?
- How well do legislation, and the mandates and operations of governmental and nongovernmental agencies, meet British Columbia's needs for economic development, environmental conservation, and integration of the economy and the environment?



Creating a Sustainable Development Strategy for British Columbia

Creating a sustainable development strategy for British Columbia will enable our province to find a better way to:

- manage growth and economic development in sustained harmony with the environment and the needs of our modern society;
- accommodate and harmonize conflicting demands for land and environmental resources;
- give communities an effective share of decision-making, while meeting responsibilities to British Columbia's overall society, to Canada and to the world;
- integrate environmental and economic values in policy, law, economics, institutions, research and information and every other aspect of our lives;
- improve the quality of our lives, use a fair share of the world's resources, and sustain the productivity and diversity of British Columbia's ecosystems.

The Strategy Document

The immediate visible outcome of the Round Table's work will be a document which will encapsulate the strategy for sustainable development in British Columbia. That document will describe the consensus which the Round Table is seeking among all interested British Columbians. The consensus, not the document, will be the true strategy for sustainable development in our province.

Nor will the Round Table, by itself, create the strategy for sustainable development; the strategy will be created by all British Columbians who wish to participate. The Round Table will act as a steering committee, providing a focus and a forum for the efforts of all participants seeking to build a consensus on a better way. That consensus will be described in publicly released reports — strategy documents — and presented to the Government of British Columbia.

The Round Table expects the strategy document to include:

- a definition and the principles of sustainable development;
- an assessment of the status of sustainable development in British Columbia;
- a means of producing indicators or criteria to determine or measure each economic sector's success in achieving sustainable development;
- consideration of issues and problems within and between economic sectors;
- consideration of options and potential solutions;
- recommendations to government on policies and the process of attaining sustainable development.

The Government of British Columbia will respond to the strategy document by enacting whatever legislative or regulatory measures it deems appropriate to put the strategy into effect. But government is not the only participant expected to implement the strategy. Achieving sustainable development will require actions by industries, communities, interest groups and individuals. The strategy document will identify those actions as well.

The Process

There are five parts to the process of creating the sustainable development strategy.

1. Consultation and Participation

The more British Columbians who participate in its creation, the better the strategy will be. The Round Table wishes to achieve a consensus from the widest possible input of information, concerns, interests and desired results. The greater the participation in forming the consensus, the greater the likelihood that all will recognize that they have a stake in the strategy, and that they will take action to implement it.

The distribution of this paper to interested parties throughout British Columbia is your invitation to join in the creation of the sustainable development strategy. From November 1990 to February 1991, Round Table members and staff will travel the province, explaining the process in more detail, answering questions and facilitating public debate on sustainable development issues.

In March and April 1991, the Round Table will conduct public forums in various parts of the province. There will be two components to these forums: The first being public hearings in which each pre-registered participant may make a ten-minute presentation to the Round Table, on a topic of their choice, followed by questions from members of the Round Table. The second being public discussion sessions focused on selected substantive issues such as energy, community development and land and water use.

Later in 1991, after a first draft of the strategy document has been circulated, a second round of public hearings will receive comments and responses.

2. Information Gathering and Analysis

With the assistance of the participants, the Round Table will analyze the main environmental and resource management issues, identifying the measures required to: integrate environmental, social and economic values; improve decision-making; and develop and conserve British Columbia's natural resources and environment for all stakeholders.

The analysis will largely be based on three sources of information. First, the Round Table will review submissions from the public, government agencies, industries, interest groups, and research and educational institutions. It will also consider several expert background papers specially prepared for the Round Table on the themes of sustainable land use, sustainable communities, and sustainable energy. And it will make use of available reports by government and non-government agencies, including:

- Environment 2001, a recently completed policy document of the Ministry of Environment which sets goals and objectives for environmental management, and expresses many issues and concerns that must be addressed;
- the British Columbia Forest Resources Commission, which is conducting an inquiry into forest management and related land use;
- a policy being prepared by the Ministry of Energy Mines and Petroleum Resources on sustainable energy development, dealing with cleaner, more efficient energy use, energy security and economic benefits;
- a system plan being prepared by the Ministry of Parks for provincial parks and ecological reserves;
- the Old-Growth Strategy project, a government and public task force under the Ministry of Parks charged with developing a long-term plan for management of old-growth forests in British Columbia.

3. Policy Recommendations

On the basis of the analysis, policy recommendations will be developed, dealing with such areas as improving decision-making, allocating resources, coordinating sectors, resolving conflicts, combining development and conservation, reducing resource waste and achieving a sustainable level of resource consumption.

4. Action Planning and Implementation

The strategy document's action plan will propose the means by which government and others — communities, industries, interest groups, research and educational institutions and individuals — can put the recommended policies to work.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Round Table will set up a procedure for monitoring and evaluating the strategy's implementation, so that it may be improved as time goes by.

How You Can Get Involved

The British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and the Economy welcomes your comments on this paper, either in writing or at a public meeting. Please feel free to tell us your views on the issues raised in the search for a sustainable development strategy for British Columbia.

If you are planning to participate in the development of the strategy, here are some questions the Round Table would like you to address in your submission:

- What is your understanding of the importance of achieving sustainable development in British Columbia?
- Is development sustainable in your part of the province, sector of the economy or area of interest? What do you think should be done to make it sustainable?
- What do you think should be done by government, other sectors and other interests?
- What do you think needs to be done to put the sustainable development principles listed on page 7 into practice?

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Source of economic data, Planning and Statistics Division, Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations.

Appendix

Theme Papers in Preparation

Sustainable Land and Water Use
Sustainable Communities
Sustainable Energy

Background Papers in Preparation

Decision processes for land allocation
Analytical methods for land allocation
Water allocation and management
Population changes
Air quality issues
Municipal water issues
Waste management issues
The British Columbia economy
Economic incentives
Resource accounting
Energy development processes
Transboundary issues